Communications Media

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With the increasing use of mass communications, the community member is exposed to sources of information other than the printed word. Ownership of radios has nearly tripled in about five years (in the 1955 survey radios were reported in 14 per cent of the households, whereas in 1949* only 5 per cent of the households reported owning a radio). Quite apart from ownership, radio listening is widespread; less than one-fifth of the people in Bang Chan claim they never listen to the radio (18 per cent). Motion pictures are also popular. Only one-tenth claim to having never attended a movie, while half (49 per cent) say they have seen motion pictures more than ten times.

There is, of course, a strong relationship between exposure to one of these media and exposure to the other. Table 13 below indicates that the majority (64 per cent) of respondents who listen to the radio likewise report frequent movie attendance. Similarly, the majority (67 per cent) of those who say they never listen to the radio, reported that they go to movies rarely or never.

TABLE 13. EXPOSURE TO RADIO AND MOVIES SHOWS HIGH INTERRELATION

	Radio Listening		
Movie Attendance	High Exposure (regular or occasional listeners) (111)	Low Exposure (listen seldom) (148)	No Exposure (60)
High exposure (10 times or more)	64%	32%	12%
Medium exposure (4 to 9 times)	19	17	21
Low Exposure (0 to 3 times)	16	51	67

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Exposure to the communications media is strongly linked to acceptance of a basic innovation such as the motor. It is not directly linked to acceptance of the other agricultural innovations (fertilizer, tilapia, mushrooms). Respondents who report frequent exposure to radio listening and motion picture attendance are significantly more likely than others to say they own or have used the motor. (Among daily radio listeners 88 per cent report use of the motor; and this proportion declines steadily until among those who never listen, only 46 per cent use the motor; for movies, the corresponding proportion of users ranges from 76 to 36 per cent.)

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* Siamese Rice Villages, op. cit.

TABLE 14. HIGH EXPOSURE TO COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA IS LINKED TO ACCEPTANCE OF THE MOTOR

	Exposure to Radio			
	High			Low
	Listens Daily (45)	Listens Occasionally (66)	Listens Seldom (148)	Never Listens (60)
Small Engine Motor				
Used it	89%	78%	64%	48%
Didn't use it	12	22	36	54

	Exposure to Movies			
	High			Low
	Ten times or more (161)	4-9 times (60)	1-3 times (75)	None (33)
Used it	76%	69%	39%	36%
Didn't use it	24	31	31	64

Of course it is important to check whether these relationships hold true when people on different economic levels are examined separately; for literates as well as for illiterates. We infer that the basic link between use of the motor and exposure to the media of communication holds for literate as well as illiterates; for poorer as well as for richer farmers. More specifically, the relationship between exposure to the communications media and decision to use the motor is even more marked for less well-to-do and for the illiterate farmers, in contrast to the better-off farmers and those who can read and write.

TABLE 15. EXPOSURE TO MOTION PICTURES IS LINKED TO ACCEPTANCE OF MOTOR ESPECIALLY FOR THE ILLITERATES AND FOR THE ECONOMICALLY LESS WELL-OFF*

	Exposure to Motion Pictures			
	High		Low	
	(Percentage Using Motor)			
Economic Level				
Low	76%	(47)	44%	(32)
High	83	(64)	73	(45)
Literacy				
Illiterate	63%	(36)	44%	(35)
Literate	88	(77)	82	(41)

* Male Farmers Only

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207 Exposure to the media of mass communication seems to act, in
a sense, as a substitute for literacy. It may be that through
212 these means either an illiterate farmer can obtain information
about the more complex agricultural tools and methods or motivation
• 546 to try improvements, or both, even though he may not know how to
read and write. One may infer that he tends to act on the infor-
mation thus obtained, since he is more likely than his unexposed
opposite number to try out these innovations.

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*177 Acceptance of Urban Patterns

369 The printed word and the mass media are, of course, not solely
channels for the communication of knowledge. They are, at the
same time a means whereby the farmers may establish some sort of
contact with the more sophisticated world outside the community
even with highly urban Bangkok.

The survey indicates in a general way the extent to which
[291] the people of Bang Chan have accepted urban patterns. Their grow-
[416] ing acceptance of urban modes is readily apparent even to a casual
[207] visitor: many own shoes, flashlights, wrist watches, radios,
bicycles, fountain pens, modern furniture.* Other urban behavior
is likewise beginning to be noticeable.

[493]
[413] One very simple indication of the degree to which urban in-
[358] fluences have penetrated is the change in manners of taking
food. The farmers traditionally eat with their hands rather than
using a fork or spoon. In Bangkok, however, eating utensils are
customarily served with the meals in restaurants and are widely
adopted as well by the city population. Some Bang Chan inhabi-
*177 tants have picked up this simple urban custom and have substituted
*178 it for eating mainly with their hands. In Bang Chan of 1953, for
example, a sizeable minority (26 per cent) report that they use a
264 spoon, fork or both for the evening meal.
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That such a simple question can roughly measure exposure
[207] to urban influences, is indicated in the following table, which
[546] shows that respondents who report customarily eating with "urban
utensils" are more likely to be exposed frequently to radio and
motion pictures and are more likely to have visited in Bangkok.

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[412] * Survey respondents report that their households possess a
flashlight (81 per cent); scissors (66 per cent); kerosene lamp
(27 per cent); radio (14 per cent). About 41 per cent say they
own at least one pair of shoes.

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TABLE 16. INHABITANTS WHO HAVE ADOPTED URBAN EATING PATTERNS ARE MORE LIKELY THAN OTHERS TO BE EXPOSED TO MASS COMMUNICATIONS AND URBAN CONTACTS

	Eating Pattern	
	With hands (242)	With fork and/or spoon (64)
Listens to radio		
Regularly (daily)	10%	25%
Occasionally	17	28
Seldom	51	35
Never	22	10
Has seen a movie		
Ten times or more	40%	72%
4 - 9 times	19	17
1 - 3 times	28	10
Never	13	1
This past year, how many times did you go to Bangkok?		
None	26%	7%
Once	18	15
2 - 4 times	29	23
5 or more times	28	55

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When acceptance of urban influences is measured even on the basis of this index, the evidence is clear that it is linked with acceptance of the agricultural innovations. Those responsive [241] to urban influence are twice as likely as others to use fertiliser (21 per cent versus 9 per cent), one and a half times as likely [244] to grow mushrooms (37 per cent versus 39 per cent), and one and a quarter times as likely to use a motor than the others (82 per [402] cent versus 61 per cent). There is no noticeable relationship, [228] however, between tilapia raising and responsiveness to urban influences. The respective proportions are shown in Table 17.

These relationships between acceptance of urban patterns and decision to use certain innovations remain constant for [212] those on high as well as low economic levels and also for the [434] literate as well as illiterate farmers.

Contacts Outside the Community

Radio and movies provide indirect contact between the community and the outside world and seem to encourage the acceptance of urban behavior patterns. (See Table 16.) In addition, however, there is direct contact between the community and the capital city. The inhabitants commute to Bangkok to sell their products or to visit. Some go to the city to live for a time, to attend the city's schools, to work as laborers or to serve in the military or police force. For example, about a quarter of the sample (26 per cent) reported that during the year preceding the survey they had been to Bangkok ten or more times. About a third of the sample (35 per cent) have lived in Bangkok, mostly for the purpose of working there. On the other hand, almost half the sample (43 per cent) have never been to the Don Muang Airport; and over two-thirds (69 per cent) have never been to the Annual Agricultural Fair.

One would expect that such direct exposure to the urban life and values of the capital city, for example, might be linked with greater readiness to try out improved methods of agriculture either because exposure to urban life may mean exposure to more information, or, less directly, may mean exposure to the urban values of economic self-advancement and experimentation. And there is, indeed, a relationship between exposure to the capital city and use of the motor. The two factors are not linked for all the residents--the relationship is a conditional one. That is, it is mainly among illiterate farmers where urban contact is associated with readier acceptance of the motor.

TABLE 19. ILLITERATE FARMERS* WHO HAVE GREATER CONTACT WITH THE CITY ARE MORE LIKELY THAN OTHERS TO USE THE MOTOR

"This past year, how many times did you go to Bangkok...?"

Literacy	Never or once (Proportion who own or use the motor)	Twice or more (Proportion who own or use the motor)
Illiterate	44% (40)	58% (51)
Literate	83 (36)	88 (83)

* Male farmers only

In the same way, there is a similar conditional link between use of the motor and wider contacts beyond the horizons of Bang Chan. Visits to the airport and to the agricultural fair, for example, (both centers of contact with urban culture) are associated with use of the motor among illiterate farmers. If the farmer can read and write, on the other hand, he is just

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TABLE 28. INCIDENCE OF HOSPITAL AND CLINIC USE IS HIGHER AMONG LITERATE VILLAGERS

Have you ever been to a clinic or a hospital?	Literate (163)	Illiterate (169)
No, never	27%	44%
Yes, for treatment	42	33
Yes, for other reasons	31	23

Apparently here, too, exposure to sources of information predisposes the inhabitants to greater acceptance of modern health practices.

Exposure to Mass Media

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Again, as with agricultural innovations, exposure to the media of mass communication is linked to acceptance of modern health practices.

TABLE 29. INCIDENCE OF HOSPITAL AND CLINIC USE IS HIGHER AMONG VILLAGERS EXPOSED TO MASS MEDIA

Have you ever been to a clinic or hospital?	Movie Attendance: Ten or more times (161)	4-9 times (60)	Three times or less (108)
No, never	23%	32%	55%
Yes, for treatment	48	33	22
Yes, for other reasons	27	35	23

	Radio Listening: Daily or occasionally (111)	Seldom (148)	Never (60)
No, never	20%	39%	58%
Yes, for treatment	52	33	18
Yes, for other reasons	28	28	23

Mass Media as a Substitute for Literacy

It will be recalled (see p. 21) that the mass media seem to act as a substitute for literacy. The same relationship reappears here. The table following indicates that literacy links with use of hospitals or clinics only when exposure to mass media is rare. [212]

*178 With more frequent exposure to these media, the link between literacy and use of hospitals or clinics decreases.
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TABLE 30. EXPOSURE TO MASS MEDIA IS LINKED TO HOSPITAL USE, ESPECIALLY AMONG ILLITERATES

	Literate (Proportion reporting use of hospital or clinic)		Illiterate (Proportion reporting use of hospital or clinic)	
Movie Attendance				
High (ten or more times)	78%	(103)	71%	(58)
Low (nine times or less)	64	(36)	48	(111)
Radio Listening				
High (listen "frequently")	81%	(68)	79%	(42)
Low (listen "seldom or never")	66	(86)	48	(122)

*178 Acceptance of Urban Practices
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Table 17 showed that acceptance of certain urban practices was linked to acceptance of the major agricultural innovations. Acceptance of urban practices is also associated with use of clinics and hospitals. Use of modern medicine is significantly higher among those who no longer eat with their hands than among those who do.

TABLE 31. ACCEPTANCE OF URBAN PRACTICES IS LINKED TO USE OF CLINIC AND HOSPITAL FACILITIES

	Customarily Eat With Fork or spoon (84)	Hands (242)
Have you ever been to a clinic or a hospital?		
No, never	26%	39%
Yes, for treatment	48	33
Yes, for other reasons	26	28

*178 Contact Outside Bang Chan
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It has already been reported (see Table 25) that hospital and clinic use is higher for those who, during the past year, have paid more frequent visits to Bangkok. This correlation may seem, at first, spurious, since the main centers of medical care are situated in Bangkok. But the questions asked about contact with Bangkok for the one-year period preceding the survey, and visits to the hospital or clinic over an unspecified time period show

The motor users formed a group with higher economic level, greater literacy, higher acceptance of urban ways of life, more frequent exposure to mass media, broader social contacts within the community, and greater use of credit facilities. Illiterate farmers might also be motor users, if their contacts with urban centers were extensive.

5. Acceptance of mushroom culture was a special case of agricultural innovation: a) as distinct from all other attitudes toward innovation, mushroom growers were not marked by their high positive attitudes toward mushroom culture; b) the investment in mushroom raising per se was less than the investment and risk required by other types of agricultural innovation.

6. The mushroom growers as a group distinct from non-mushroom growers were more literate and acceptive of urban ways. Tilapia raisers were of a higher economic level and had greater community contacts than non-tilapia raisers.

7. An hypothesis was offered: that innovations differ in complexity and investment of effort required. The more complex presuppose greater investment, work, risk and postponement of returns; hence this complex kind requires greater motivation than the simpler ones such as mushroom raising.

8. Use of hospital and clinic facilities was more frequent among the literate, those exposed to mass media, those accepting of urban ways and those having greater contacts with the city. Unlike accepters of agricultural innovations, users of modern medical facilities were not of a higher economic level than non-users and could not be clearly distinguished on the basis of breadth of contact within the community or use of credit facilities.

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[513] f. During the last year, did it occur to you frequently, sometimes, or never that you had a nightmare?

4.	Frequently	16
5.	Occasionally	120
6.	Never	197

[546] 35. In your life, how many times have you seen a movie, or haven't you ever seen one?

5.	Ten times and more	161
6.	4 to 9 times	60
7.	1 to 3 times	75
8.	Never	33
—	No Answer	4

[426] 36.a. Excuse me, I'd like to ask about a problem common in rural places all over the world. Do you now have a debt or not?

5.	Yes	192
6.	No	140
7.	Unascertainable	1

b. IF YES: Is your debt now higher, or lower, or about the same as it was two years ago?

8.	Higher	68
9.	Lower	95
X.	About the same	28
Y.	Unascertainable	1

c. IF NO: How about two years ago, did you have a debt then or not?

9.	Yes	61
X.	No	78
Y.	Unascertainable	—
—	No Answer	1

[441] 37.a. Do you or anybody in your household buy certain products in order to resell them at a profit?

9.	Yes	85
X.	No	242
Y.	Unascertainable	2
—	No Answer	4

b. IF YES: Do (you/they) sell things regularly, occasionally or just at festival times?

7.	Regularly	31
8.	Occasionally	49
9.	Just at festival times	5
X.	Unascertainable	—

[241] 38.a. And now, I would like to know a little more about fertiliser. Do you think fertiliser is very good, fairly good or bad?

1.	Very good	106
2.	Fairly good	149
3.	Bad	15
4.	Unascertainable	63